

Ten Commandments - Part 6: The Golden Image, Obelisks, King Nebuchadnezzar & Jacob's Trouble (3/5/2023)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/k7fmgvn/the-ten-commandments-part-6>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserving the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterated, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

Shabbat Shalom.

Well, we are going to continue in our series here, and today I want to take you to the extremely and highly prophetic book known as the book of Daniel. If you're one of those that has any interest whatsoever in eschatology, if you consider yourself a prophecy buff, that the talk of the end times is a passion of yours, and if you want to know what it's going to look like when the antichrist rises (he literally rises up and starts implementing his agenda all over this world), then I can tell you this is your book. The book of Daniel is kind of a sister book to Revelation, it's a companion if you will, and we're going to dig into a particular story there.

Over the last couple weeks, we've been peeling back layer after layer regarding idolatry and seeing all these different situations that fall under this umbrella. We're going to get another one today, and this one is intense. This one I would consider to be more of a final layer, so I think we're in for a treat today.

There are things that we're going to be covering today that I think for some of you are going to challenge you. I think in some ways, some of you might be encouraged, and in other ways you might be troubled. All these things are good things; all these things can be edifying. I just know my original plan was that of the things that we're going to talk about today, I wasn't going to talk about any of it. I was going to gloss over everything we're going to talk about and just get to the punch line. There's just so much here that is so relevant and so important for us to have, especially in the context of where we're at right now talking about idolatry, that I had to go back and stop and take the time. So basically, what I'm telling you is we're not going to get done today with what we need to; this is going to carry over into next week a little bit.

With that said, let's break into this. **Daniel 3:1**, this is our story for today: **Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width was six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.** Now, I'm going to tell you there's a lot to talk about that I just want to piece out a little bit. The first thing I want to talk about, ironically enough, isn't found here at all; there's no mention of it. What is that? It refers to the timing. I want to know the timing of when the king set up this golden image. The timing is important as you're going to see in a moment. Now despite not finding it here, fortunately, there's hope. No worry. We can go to the Greek translation of the Hebrew

Bible, and we are given the exact time. In the [Greek Septuagint LXX Daniel 3:1a - In the eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar](#).

What are we talking about? Now we have an exact time, the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar is about 588 BC. Why is that important? That's very important. Let me take you to Jeremiah 52, and you're going to see why. We read in [Jeremiah 52:29 - In the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons](#). You get what's going on here? Follow this: the very year that the king sets up this gold image for all humanity to come and fall before it in worship, that very year, it's the very year that Jerusalem comes under attack. It is the year that Yerushalayim is under siege by Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, Jerusalem is experiencing a tribulation. Jerusalem is experiencing what you would call the 'Time of Jacob's Trouble'. Do you want to talk about mind blowing? Are you putting the pieces of prophetic foreshadowing together here? What we are getting into today is mind-blowing and extremely relevant; it is foreshadowing of what we're about to experience. That there will be a great time of Jacob's trouble in Yerushalayim and the Jewish people experiencing this, and that is the time (be looking) that the antichrist is going to ascend, he's going to make an image, and he is going to ask all to bow down to it. So, this is getting interesting right off the bat.

Moving forward but and staying in the Septuagint for a moment because I want to finish out this verse—[Septuagint LXX Daniel 3:1b - When he](#) (meaning Nebuchadnezzar) [was governing the cities and countries](#) (and listen to this, this is where it differs, it says this) [and even all the inhabitants of the earth, from India to Ethiopia, he constructed a golden image,...](#) (brackets added). Amazing! This is mind-blowing because the Septuagint is getting into the timing of things. It tells us specifically the 18th year, when King Nebuchadnezzar was king, that this is what's going on. In the backdrop, we have Yerushalayim coming under total tribulation, but it gets more specific. It's the timetable when he lifts this image up; he is ruling over all the inhabitants of the earth.

Do you know what one of the titles for King Nebuchadnezzar is? He's called the *Melech Malchei* or the *Melech Ha'melachim*. The term means the "king of kings." It is a term that you will find multiple times in Scripture describing Nebuchadnezzar. Now this, for most of us, we know we only call One King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Nebuchadnezzar bears this title for a reason. It's because he is, as you would see Paul wrote to the Corinthians regarding HaSatan, the god of this age. Yeshua says multiple times of HaSatan: he is the ruler of this world. It is fascinating when you get into that wilderness discourse between Yeshua where He's driven out into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. One of the temptations that comes up is that Satan brings Yeshua up to the high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Satan tells Yeshua that, "All these kingdoms I will give to You for they've been given to me, and I give them to whomever I wish." He rules all the kingdoms. The fact that Nebuchadnezzar is called the *Melech Ha'melachim* is significant, and what the Septuagint picks up on is a massive backdrop for us as we begin to dig into this story.

So, with that said, let's go back to the Hebrew portion, and technically it's Aramaic. [Daniel 3:1 - Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold](#). Now let me ask you, what is the purpose of this image? Was this simply a decorative image to kind-of spruce up and decorate Babylon so it looks good? Or was it something that Nebuchadnezzar, wanting to be glorious like all the roman emperors after him, would do? We know all throughout history this is the thing people, leaders, all over the world do. They are building these great churches, building these great castles, and building these great things so that their name would become great. Is that the situation? Oh, no. It is beyond that. This image is being

made for one exclusive purpose, and that is for all humanity to come, fall on their knees, and worship before it. That's the purpose here.

I think about this, and this is going to come into play a little later as we get into this. I want you to try to put yourself back there. As we go through this story, you want as much as possible to get yourself in the historical context and ask yourself questions like the following: Is Nebuchadnezzar asking the inhabitants of the earth anything difficult? Is he asking for their first-born? Is he asking for the bank accounts? Is he asking for the assets? Is he asking for their homes? Is he asking for any of this? It is interesting because he's not. Physically speaking, what he is asking is nothing; it's almost innocent. He wants them to simply bow down and honor and pay homage to this image.

It's those moments, and I kid you not, that if you do not have the commandments of God locked in your heart where you are committed to them, where you are going to hear the Voice of the Lord more than you will hear any other voice, you will find that many believers are going to bow, and they're going to justify it twelve ways from Sunday. It's coming, and it talks about it in Scripture that it's coming.

As we move on, check this out as we're going to get into some aspects. There's one specific description that is attached to this image, and that is the following: **Daniel 3:1 - ...its height was sixty cubits, and its width was six cubits.** So, when you look at this and put this in today's standards of measurement used in America, we find it is ninety feet high and nine feet wide. That's a significant image. But here's what's amazing: notice that it reads in Scripture that Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold. It is very generic. And nowhere will you find through the text that there's any description that Nebuchadnezzar made this in the image of himself. He didn't; it's a generic term. It doesn't say he made it in the image..., although you go back to chapter two, we're talking about a very different image that he saw in his dream. That has nothing to do with this. This very, very different image mentioned in chapter 2 is very descriptive of the whole image. Here, however, there's no description whatsoever.

What is even crazier than that regarding the generic term is that you're given the dimensions of this generic image. Start combing through the Bible and look at all the gods that are mentioned. It is unbelievable. Scripture is littered with all the false gods such as Asherah's, Asherah poles, and all this stuff. With none of them do you find a description of measurements. Do you understand what I'm telling you? The fact that we're given specific measurements is huge. It's crying out: stop and investigate! Soak this moment in because there's something going on here; this is really peculiar.

With that being said, scholars, amongst other students of the Bible, recognize what's being described here was an image that was quite well known and common during Nebuchadnezzar's day. And believe me, thousands of years before Nebuchadnezzar, these images were common. What am I referring to? What is being described here is an image of an obelisk image. We still have these images today. Check this out:



The Vatican obelisk at Saint Peter's Square. It is right in the middle of Saint Peter's square.



These are based on the Egyptian obelisk from 4500 years old. You might ask yourself: what is it? This is an important bit of information. The Egyptians literally designed these obelisks to venerate the sun god Ra. It is an object, specifically an image, to connect with this false pagan god. This is a pagan idol. It kind of makes you wonder, what in the world is this thing doing dead in the middle of Saint Peter's Square when secular historians, as well as Christian historians, recognize it's an ancient pagan symbol. There's no debate. It's a symbol of how they connected with the false god. That's an interesting thing.

A little side note of history regarding the topic. Caligula brought this over. The crazy emperor who wanted to make his horse a senator. This is the madman who ate pearls. How bizarre! It wasn't done by a pope or by a decree of some god-fearing individual saying, "Yeah, we need to bring this to Rome." It was a crazy madman who wanted this thing to come to Rome, and eventually it would be brought into Saint Peter's Square.

This gets even more real when we look in our own backyard, and we look at the Washington Monument in DC.



Imagine this thing covered all in gold, how brilliant that would be, and how the sun would be reflecting off it. It would be brilliant. A little interesting side note is when you look at the dimensions that we're given, 90 feet by 9 feet wide, it's a 10:1 ratio. It just so happens that the Washington Monument is a 10:1 ratio: 555 feet high by 55 feet square at the base. It's a 10:1 ratio. So, when we look at this 10:1 ratio, we know what's really going on; this is an obelisk situation because we are given specific dimensions.

Now, I want to take this to a completely different level. I want to take this into the spiritual realm. The way I want to do this is to show you some commentary by Irenaeus. For those of you not familiar with Irenaeus, this is an early church father who, in the second century, was profound. He's one of the most prolific. If you're one of those people who is an early church father buff, and you love the early church fathers, Irenaeus is in the top three favorites because his work is so prolific. He was an apologist. You must remember that during the second century, Satan was vomiting perverse ideology and theology all over the church. They were literally surrounded because it was coming in from every direction. During that time, Irenaeus stood up to defend the faith. He went to combat Gnosticism and go against the Marcionites and others. He does it vehemently and with great articulation.

This guy talks about the antichrist. He gives a commentary that directly relates to the dimensions in our story, and I want to share this with you because this is so profound and relevant to where we're going. So, please pay attention here.

In *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus said - [Therefore, shall his \[the Antichrist's\] name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six](#). Now obviously, Irenaeus is referencing from the end of chapter 13 of the book of Revelation. There we are told that whoever has understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast. In other words, math must be done to calculate the number of the beast. It is a number of a man; it's a number of his name as we would go on to find out. So, Irenaeus is drawing from this; he's talking about the mark of the beast, and he's talking about the number of the beast. Then he goes on and says this: [since he sums up](#). Look at his work; you need to pay close attention because Irenaeus is very careful with what he's written: [he sums up](#). Remember, it takes math. What we are doing when you get into this realm is math: [he sums up in his own person](#). In other words, he's talking about the antichrist, in his behavior, in his character, and who he is. There is a sum.

Continuing: [all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge](#), (meaning the flood) [due to the apostasy of the angels](#). (Brackets added). In other words, the antichrist is the entire embodiment of all the sin that took place before the flood. So, what Irenaeus is conveying here is that if you're going to identify the antichrist, you must look at his character. You must look at his behavior because it's the reflection of his name. Think of it this way, and track with me here because this is important: go back to Exodus 33, at least in your mind, where Moses says, "Show me Your glory," when he was talking to the God of Israel. The next thing we read is the Lord's response: "I will allow all My goodness to pass before you and I will proclaim the Name of the LORD/YHVH." The Tetragrammaton - this is what the Lord promises Moses.

Jump to **Exodus 34:6** where it goes on to proclaim His Name. It says - **YHVH, YHVH** (or Yehovah, Yehovah) **God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth** (brackets added). That is the Name of the Lord. The Name of the Lord is understood and defined by who He is and by His character. We know our God. I see it when I look at you and see you moving about doing righteousness; I know that Yeshua is in you. His Name is in you because He is merciful, He is gracious, He is long-suffering, and He is abounding in goodness and truth.

It's so imperative we understand this aspect of what Irenaeus is really digging into regarding how biblical this concept is and how deep it is. The Name is not simply a name; it's more than that. It's the character; that's how we understand the Name.

Isn't it fascinating when you go to John 17, Yeshua prayed this amazing prayer to the Father. He says, "I have declared Your Name." So, Yeshua says that He has "declared Your Name," and later He says, "I manifested Your Name." Let me ask you: was Yeshua referring to the fact that He went around screaming out the Tetragrammaton? Not at all. All you need to do is go to John chapter 5 and what He says is, "I have a greater witness than John's for the works that the Father has given Me to do, those works I have done." His testimony to bear the Name of His Father was in His character; it was in His works. This is fundamental; this is what Irenaeus is picking up on, and I agree with this wholeheartedly.

Now, we continue: [Against Heresies - For Noah was 600 years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah](#). It is interesting that Irenaeus recognizes what most of us recognize today, that the flood was one of the most pivotal moments in time. There is no question about it. But isn't it interesting how Irenaeus is looking at this and says this is an identification moment? This is a special marker in Scripture. It is a marker that demands our total attention. Let me ask you, how many times did the Lord destroy the earth? Once, last time I checked. One time.

Now, does that draw special attention? Absolutely! There is no question about it; it draws special attention. It specifically homes in on a detail that is as peculiar as the dimensions that were given regarding the idol, and that is the fact that Noah is 600 years old. Do you know when you go back to Genesis 7, within five verses that statement is made twice, so it's to awaken you. The fact that it's even included is interesting. All he had to say is, "You know what? Noah got on the boat, and God brought the flood." When you look at the book of Enoch, you find that there is so much missing from the account of the flood given in Genesis. There's so much more to know and understand. Considering what happened, there are very few details given. But one of the details we're given multiple times is the fact that Noah was 600 years old when this happened.

Moving ahead: And [the Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just. For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias and Misael (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise toward [the time of the] end. (Brackets added).

Do you get everything he just brought together? Let me put this in simple terms. First, he comes out and says, regarding the antichrist, we go back to the flood where we have this key marker that Noah was 600 years old when God unleashed hell on the inhabitants of the earth. Then he goes to the image. He says the other marker that we have is in the book of Daniel, our feature story today. The dimensions of the idol, interestingly enough, are sixty cubits by six cubits, and then you have 666, specifically math.

600 (Noah's age)
60 cubits (height)
<u>6 cubits (width)</u>
666 Total

Let's say just for a moment that you're not sold on this; you're not really compelled. Fair enough. What Irenaeus has laid out has blown my mind; it's more than compelling. I'll explain myself in a moment. But slide that aside. Let's just say you're into the gematria, you're really looking at the gematria, or you have the Greek alphabet that carries numerical value with its letters, you have the Hebrew that carries numerical values with its letters, and you've had generation after generation of men that are looking at everybody's name of anyone who knows anybody and asking, "Does their name add up to 666?" And this is how we've done it.

As a side note, it's interesting that Irenaeus talks about this in his discourse, which we're not going to get into. However, he says, "Please be careful. We have been so reckless. Men are so reckless because virtually every name can be added up to 666." It just takes a little massaging, a little playing, and we can get everyone to fit the mold. Half of you wouldn't leave this room without me declaring you the antichrist.

Do you see the insanity? That is not healthy, Biblical exegesis; that is not the way we're to approach this. Right? One thing that I appreciate right off the bat is that when Irenaeus goes to identify the beast, even the number of the beast, he doesn't go outside of Scripture. Stop and take that in for a moment. If God has revealed the number of the beast to John in the book of Revelation, might we, (and it's supposed to be doing math), look to the Word, Scripture itself, as the key to unlock the mystery? I hardly need to answer that question, I think. The answers are in the Word. Amen? That's where the answers are.

Now, even if you're not sold on it, slide that aside. Do you know what's not debatable? That the story of Noah and the story that we're talking about today in the book of Daniel, are prophetic of the end times. There is no debate about that. But isn't it interesting that you take these two stories together, and you can add up 666.

Let me take this a step further, which really adds to the intrigue of what Irenaeus has laid out here. Irenaeus doesn't mention this, which kind of blows my mind. You go to the book of Matthew, which is one of the greatest discourses if not the greatest discourse on the end times. His apostles come to Him and say, "What will the sign of Your coming be and what will the end of the age be? What's the sign? What do we look for?" And Yeshua, in Matthew 24 goes through this litany, this entire discourse, all

about the end times. The first thing He talks about is that false prophets and false christ's are going to arrive, and we need to beware! The first thing Yeshua is worried about is the level of deception that will exist before He comes back. It will be an unprecedented deception. And then you go to Matthew 24:24, it says, "If it were possible, even the elect are going to be taken out." If it were possible. He goes on to talk about nations in that you'll hear of wars and rumors of wars: nations will rise against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms. And then he talks about a great persecution that comes against the church, unlike never before. What Yeshua is describing in Matthew 24 is horrific tribulation.

Do you know there are only two names mentioned in that entire chapter? Only two: Noah and the prophet Daniel. Let that sink in for a moment. As Yeshua is answering the question asked by the disciples regarding end times, there are only two names Yeshua brings to the table. It takes us back to the days of Noah, to the name of Noah, and to the prophet Daniel. You cannot make this stuff up. You can't. You just can't do it.

This is how Irenaeus ends this discourse: **Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years.** In other words, if you want to know who the antichrist is, you better embed yourself in these sermons, these messages, and these stories, and extract it. And I kid you not, as you go and dig into these, revelation after revelation comes flying at you. It's absolutely incredible!

Now going back to **Daniel 3:1 - Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits.** Obviously incredibly profound; this is prophetic. And then he says this: **He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.** Now the thing about this is, and there's all sorts of hypotheses and nobody really knows where Dura is, but one thing that is not debatable is the fact it was in the province of Babylon. That's exactly what it says when you go to the Hebrew or the Aramaic: **in the province of Babylon.** So, this image is set up in Babylon, and it's in a plain, and scholars estimate that, given the dimensions of this being set up in a plain, this thing could be seen from 13 miles from every direction. If you're going to make a statement, this guy's making a statement. There's no question about it. He is making sure there's plenty of room for everyone to come, fall, and worship.

Daniel 3:2 - And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps (princes), the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces. In other words, everyone and anyone who had a position of any consequence from all provinces (not some provinces but all provinces), they were summoned. They were called to present themselves. Why? Well, we learn as we continue: **to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

This word "dedication" is *hanukkah*; the Aramaic is *hanukkah*. It's a dedication. I want you to understand that this very word even in the Aramaic is found in Ezra. Do you know what it's regarding? The dedication of the Lord's temple. Take this in right now so you can appreciate what is absolutely unfolding, what's being asked, and the importance of this dedication. All you need to ask yourself is what was the importance of the dedication of the Lord's temple? What was the importance? He says, "wə-ā-šū lî miq-dāš; wə-šā-kan-tî bə-tō-w-kām: Have them make Me a sanctuary that I might dwell among them." The whole concept was to connect with God. Well, it's interesting. That's why the Egyptians made it: so they could connect with the sun god Ra. So, the fact is that this is a dedication, this

is a time of sanctification, this is a time of honor, and this is a time of confession. This is a very important moment.

And we move to **Daniel 3:3** - So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the councilors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces (not some of the officials, all of the officials of the provinces) gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (Brackets added). In other words, what did Nebuchadnezzar just do? He gathered virtually the entire world to this dedication. And I must tell you that this is the mark of the antichrist. This is one of the things that he will do: he will gather the world to become one. We have template after template showing this to be the truth. Go back to Nimrod; Nimrod gathered the world to become one people. They all had the same goals, and they started to build the Tower of Babel. Nimrod was a typology of the antichrist; it's a template. We have another template: Antiochus Epiphanes. He did the exact same thing so that all beings would become one people, we would go in the same direction, and we would be on the exact same page. This is what Nebuchadnezzar does because he is a typology of the antichrist.

Daniel 3:4 - Then a Herald cried aloud: 'To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations and languages.' Notice, to you it is not suggested, it's not a recommendation. No, no, no. This is a command. So, in other words, there's no opt out clause here. Oh, guess what? There's no medical exemption or religious exemption. All there is is the mandate. That's all you have. All you have is this ridiculous law.

Unfortunately, the spirit of antichrist doesn't take no for an answer. Look in **Revelation 13:7** - Authority was given to him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. I want to point this out: everything that is said here is virtually an identical statement to what is said here in Revelation. You cannot read this story without tripping over all the Scriptures in Revelation. It's just coming off the page. The authority was given to the antichrist, the beast, over every tribe and tongue. That's exactly what is said right here because Nebuchadnezzar has made the command.

Daniel 3:5 - That at that time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music... You better believe it. I don't think I need to tell most of you that the devil uses music, and it is directly tied to worship. You can go talk to Brett Holman, one of our worship leaders, and he will tell you he knows. It is the devil. I have told stories about my own dad who was in a rock band. He was a lead singer; he toured the nation. One of the things that freaked him out the most is that when he went into a concert, I want to say it was Black Sabbath. His entire band was there, and they were invited to this. When they went inside the building, one of his bandmates who did not use drugs or alcohol (my dad was a stickler on that), starts laughing and freaking out. His head is peered back, and he's looking up to the rafters of the building. I'm not making this up. This is before my dad got saved; he didn't even know what to do with it. And my dad asked him, "What is wrong with you?". The guy's response was, "Don't you see it? All the demons that are in the rafters are laughing; they're hysterically laughing." My dad told me this guy was involved in the occult, so I don't even need to go down that road. The devil has used music as a key instrument to worship him, and you see that element here.

But then it says this: when you hear that music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. So, the mandate has gone out, the edict's been imposed, and the terms and the expectations are clear: everyone must worship this pagan idol. Everyone is being called to worship that which is not God. You know this is a perfect snapshot of Satan's ultimate goal. Do you remember

me telling you he has prepared a place for you? This is the place he wants to bring you. This is the ultimate; this is the ultimate ultimatum when you think about it, for him.

Daniel 3:6 - And whoever does not fall down in worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. That is a little motivation. Now he's not asking you to do anything hard, this is, physically speaking, as easy as it gets. But if you don't do something that is so simple and as easy as it gets, well then, you're done. He's going to destroy you. He is coming for you.

This is a life and death situation now. This isn't a situation where you're at risk of losing your job. This is not a situation where you're at risk of losing your house. It's not anything like that. This is a situation where you are literally at risk of losing your life; your life is on the line. It's these moments that I get concerned about because of everything that I've read in Scripture regarding how Christians are going to fold. It's so painful.

As I have mentioned earlier, we have all these forms of idolatry. We have a form of idolatry that totally rejects any notion of the God of Israel and rejects any notion of Yeshua. And people just jump ship; it is total rejection. They are saying, "I'm going to worship whatever I want to worship." Well, that's straight up idolatry. But then you have a much more deceptive version of idolatry that says, "You know what? I can trust in Jesus, but I also can trust in what I have in the bank, all the little things that give me security and comfort, all the material possessions, and all these things." There are Christians that say, "I can love Jesus, but I can also love the world." That's a level of deception that is certainly idolatry. You're lifting idols in your heart.

But this is a whole other level of idolatry; this is an entirely other level. There's no more negotiating. Before this, Satan is negotiating with you. There are negotiations. He's trying to allure you with temptations through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But what happens when he can't get you to bow through everything that he's willing to offer you? This is his final play. That's why I say this is the final layer as you peel back to idolatry, and Satan will go here.

I think about the discussion that Satan had with the Lord. This is one of the rarest moments where you see Satan and the Lord talking as recorded in the book of Job. And what does Satan say? The Lord's all proud of Job because he's righteous. Job doesn't fail Him; he serves Him diligently. Satan responds with something that has reverberated throughout the Scriptures for me. It's something he understands about humanity, and that is this: **Job 2:4 - Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.** This is Satan; this is what he knows. This is his experience with humanity. It's why he expected Job, despite being this righteous, God-fearing man, to curse God to His face. Because when his own life is on the line, he knows he's going to bend.

I could take you through parts of history showing you Christians totally compromising. They were all fine up until Roman emperors came in, until Trajan came in. He told them they were going to be put to death if they didn't renounce Yeshua, Jesus the Christ. Then suddenly, the population of the Christian church dwindled quick. You are talking about the ultimate test here. How are you going to fare when it comes to this? I can hear in my head all these justifications that Christians are going to give when they get to that moment saying, "Really, my life is literally on the line? Okay, now this is shaking me to the core. Here's the deal: I'm being asked to bow before this idol. God knows my heart, so it's okay. I'll bow a little; I'll bow because He knows my heart is not with this idol."

We find the way the devil works because in their minds they are going to think, “You know this is actually going to give me more of an opportunity to witness to the people around me who clearly are lost.” You laugh. Christians find unbelievable ways to justify what they need to do to survive.

Another thought is, “Am I really going to lose my salvation because I bow? I’m standing here, there is an idol right there, and the music is playing. Just because I bow does not mean my hearts in it. The Lord knows my heart's not in it. Am I going to lose my salvation?” Many Christians will say, “No.” I’m telling you this is as real as it gets, and this is how important it is for you to look at the commandments of God and just believe them. When He says, “You shall not make a graven image; you should not bow and worship it,” trust me when I say this: You want to do that? You will lose your salvation. That’s what's going to happen. You have to see that the Ten Commandments are so imperative. People cannot have other gods before Him. And this nonsense of, “Well, God knows my heart; therefore, I can do this.” Actually, He does know your heart, and your own actions prove your heart. In Scripture it says, “By their fruit you will know them.” The moment you bend the knee to the devil, you are his. That's the reality.

I want to take you to the book of Maccabees where we are going to sum this up. **I Maccabees 1:41-42 - Then the king...** If you are not familiar with the book of Maccabees, this is part of the Apocrypha. It is coupled there with the book of Wisdom of Solomon, which we already covered in the series. Even Martin Luther spoke heavily of this book in the positive way that the obstinate will not acknowledge it, but the righteous would. But this is history, and this is from the book of Daniel. There's a reason we're going here: this is the fulfillment of prophecy in the book of Daniel regarding Antiochus Epiphanes, who is a typology of the antichrist. I’m taking you here so I can show you what he did. **Then the king** (Antiochus, this antichrist) **wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people.** (Brackets added).

This is the exact same thing that Nebuchadnezzar did, because this is what the antichrist is going to do: “They should be all one people; let's all go in the same direction. Aren't we politically correct?” So, the whole world is going to ‘go woke.’ Continuing - **that all should give up their particular customs.** In other words, to ‘go woke’ you must sacrifice those things that you grew up with. If you grew up in the faith, those religious practices that you do, that you're accustomed to, that’s no good because that's not good for society. You're offending others, and that's hateful. You need to give up your particular customs.

I Maccabees 1:43 - And all the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. (Listen to this) **Many, even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols** (the first command! Israel knew this was wrong) **they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath.** (Brackets added). This from Israel, the people of God! You know, Paul tells us the spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, and they will give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. When it gets heated up, when things get ramped up, then Christians start to fall.

I Maccabees 1:48-49 - They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, so that they would forget the law/Torah (that's the goal of the devil: forget the Law) **and change all the ordinances.** (Brackets added). And that's what is talked about in the book of Daniel: he will seek to change times and law. That is where we forget our God. **He added, “And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die.”** Do you understand? He's done playing. No more negotiating and no more temptations. Now it is do or die: “You will do what I say or else.”

Go back to what I said; this is amazing. You can see all these examples of this happening. When Yeshua refused to take all that glory of all those kingdoms that were given to HaSatan, Satan tried tempting Him. But when that didn't work, what did he do? He put Him on the cross; he killed Him. Now the

beauty of the story is He rose from the grave, so that didn't do any good. But do you see the pattern of the devil? If he can't get you this way, he is ultimately going to say.....

I'm saying this because if you're not ready to endure this and make your decision to say, "I will die for Jesus; I will die for Yeshua. I'm solidified, and I will not compromise." And how do you compromise? His commandments. Your love will be compromised the moment you compromise His Word.

Let's move ahead. **I Maccabees 2:15** - The king's officers who were enforcing the apostasy came to the town of Modein to make them offer sacrifice. Do you understand? The spirit of antichrist is coming, and he's going to start imposing these ridiculous mandates. **I Maccabees 2:16** - Many from Israel came to them; and Matthias and his sons were assembled. These are righteous men. **I Maccabees 2:17-18** - Then the king's officers spoke to Matthias as follows: "You are a leader, honored and great in this town, and supported by sons and brothers. Now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles (look at this manipulation!) and the people of Judah and those who are left in Jerusalem have done." (Brackets added). Notice what he did. The enemy came and said, "Look at those around you; look at your brothers and sisters who have become compromised. Look at them; they have conceded." What is going to happen when you have all these Christians in that moment, where it's a do or die moment, who are having a hard enough time building up the faith and the strength to hold the line in order to say, "I'm willing to die," when all of a sudden they see the people they know, they love, they worshiped with, that sat next to you in service, start to fall? Do you understand how intense this is going to get? As the song says, "Though none go with me, still I will follow." Right? That's where you need to be mentally. You need to be prepared and resolved in your heart, or you will not make it. I have seen too much in history, and I've read too much in the Bible, to know that if you're not resolved now, you're not going to be resolved later. You must get this right.

I Maccabees 2:18 - Then you and your sons will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honored with silver and gold and many gifts. The enemy, just like he was willing to do to Yeshua, will be willing to bless you. He's not only going to make it easy to worship, but he's also actually going to make it to your advantage: "We're going to give you rebate checks; we're going to give you some other, you know - tax breaks, and we're going to give you a whole lot of free stuff."

All of that is interesting because we see a lot of that right now. That concerns me. But this is what he's willing to do just to sweeten the pot. It's all good, and you will be friends with everyone. Isn't it nice to live at peace with a radicalized society? Not really.

We're going to end right here before it gets even crazier. So next week will, Lord willing, give us the opportunity, we're going to continue in this story. You're going to see how powerful this story is and how much it speaks to us at the level, and regarding our concept that we're dealing with, of idolatry. So, with that said, let's pray.